

# ORM NEWS

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Resolution Management

[www.va.gov/orm](http://www.va.gov/orm)



**"Honoring and Serving our Nation's Veterans by Promoting  
Discrimination-free Environments"**

**September 2005**

*From the Deputy Assistant Secretary*



## **Helping Those in Need**

This month's column will be a simple request that each of us reach out to help others.

Normally, I write a column later in the year urging all of us to support the Combined Federal Campaign. Because of Hurricane Katrina's destruction and its aftermath, which affected so many, I am making the request that we support those in need a little earlier.

Each of us has an opportunity to help someone in need. That could be a need for material goods, emotional support or both. Those needs will be both short-term and long-term. I encourage each of us to simply think about what we can do to help those in need. I know that you will help, as I have seen examples of your generosity many times since joining ORM in 2001. A recent example of your generosity is the support you've provided to two of your colleagues from Mid-South Operations who were affected by Hurricane Katrina. When I spoke to them, they both expressed their sincere appreciation and gratitude for the support you have given them. Given their circumstances, I am impressed by their strength and commitment to look forward to the future to rebuild their lives and by the support you have given them and others affected by this catastrophe.

The fact that most of us cannot be present to physically help those in need, does not diminish our ability to support our coworkers or the many others in need of assistance. The distance does not diminish either the value of our gifts or the appreciation of the recipients. Thanks for helping.

**James S. Jones ■**

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# Central Plains Operations Responds to Hurricane Katrina

By Linda Keller, Central Plains Operations

**“Astrodome at capacity, but buses with evacuees keep coming.” This was one of the many headlines from the *Houston Chronicle* newspaper regarding Hurricane Katrina’s devastating aftermath.**

Charlotte Jones, Central Plains Operations (CPO) Regional EEO Manager, upon notification from Houston Field Office employees of a proposed clothing drive, quickly endorsed the suggestion. In a message to her employees, Mrs. Jones wrote, “There are so many displaced individuals who have no money, shelter, clothing and/or the basic needs for day-to-day living and who are not sure about their tomorrow. I encourage all who can to make a difference.” And a difference they made – in two days the Central Plains Operations employees located in Amarillo, Texas; Leavenworth, Kansas; Denver Colorado; St. Louis, Missouri; and Albuquerque, New Mexico, united with their counterparts in Houston, Texas, to donate a total of \$655.00 to the American Red Cross. In addition to their monetary donations, Houston CPO employees also donated clothing, toys, shoes, toiletries, food, and water.

As a strong advocate for those in need, Annie Fontenet, CPO Administrative Officer, along with three other Houston citizens, established a drop off and distribution center for donations near the Astrodome. What initially began as a



Left to right: Marilyn Calloway, Linda Keller, Olivia Thomas, and Maggie Padilla are delighted in CPO’s contribution to the American Red Cross.



Annie Fontenet and Maggie Padilla at the drop off/distribution center outside the Astrodome.

small gesture of assistance became one of the largest distribution sites in the city of Houston. By the end of the Labor Day weekend, 15 to 18 truck loads of clothing, personal items, and food had been collected and delivered to the shelters that housed Katrina evacuees. In addition, Mrs. Fontenet has been instrumental in placing individuals with Houston families. Mrs. Fontenet and her family, along with numerous volunteers, spent countless hours assisting the evacuees. To date, Mrs. Fontenet continues her efforts in finding homes for evacuees.



Donated supplies are loaded into trucks for delivery to hurricane victims.

Three CPO employees, who requested not to be identified, also spent their Labor Day weekend as volunteers at the Astrodome and Reliant Park shelters where the evacuees are being housed. Central Plains Operations employees remain committed to continuing their efforts in assisting the victims of Hurricane Katrina, including our ORM colleagues, Norma Reed (Jackson, Mississippi) and Carselia Renard (New Orleans, Louisiana). ■

## Thank You ORM

Thank you to all of the ORM family who responded to the request to assist our fellow employees who were affected by Hurricane Katrina. This unprecedented disaster devastated the lives hundreds of thousands of Americans in the area affected by both the hurricane and its aftermath. Again, thank you to everyone who responded to this request and to those of you who have also provided support to our fellow citizens who were affected by this disaster. To find out more about what you can do to help the many others affected by this disaster, go to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or you can call the Red Cross at **1 800 HELP NOW**. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has information on their website on assistance for victims of Katrina who can apply on-line for disaster assistance. Go to [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov). ■

# ORM Customer Service Surveys

The Customer Service Division surveys both internal and external ORM customers. One important group surveyed is individuals participating in the complaint process. They include:

- ☐ Aggrieved Parties/Complainants/Representatives
- ☐ Responding Management Officials

## Survey distribution:

- ☐ Surveys are sent 14 days after each stage of the complaint process (informal and formal) ends.
- ☐ Recipients of survey are determined by data in the Web Based Tracking System.
- ☐ Methods of distribution – electronic & manual.
- ☐ Survey response data is analyzed and evaluated by the Customer Service Division.
- ☐ Response data is provided to ORM Field Managers on a quarterly basis to:
  - ❖ Monitor customer service.
  - ❖ Identify training needs.
  - ❖ Make improvements or changes, as necessary.
  - ❖ Identify best practices and recognize good work.



Customer service also collects data from our other external customers. They include:

- ☐ EEO Managers
- ☐ Senior Management
- ☐ Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- ☐ VA's Office of Employment Discrimination  
Complainant Adjudication

Collecting customer service data helps ORM in our quest for continual improvement. For more information contact the Customer Service Division.

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# Office Notes

## Field Manager Appointments

Rosa Franco, Chief Operating Officer, announced, on August 30, 2005, the appointments of Waltrunette Gardner as the Field Manager for the Mid-Atlantic Operations and Charlotte Jones as the Field Manager for Central Plains Operations. Waltrunette had been serving as the acting Field Manager for Mid-Atlantic Operations and Charlotte had been serving as the Organizational Climate Assessment Program Manager.

## ORM Washington, DC Based Employees Join Forces to Assist Families Affected by Hurricane Katrina

Employees of the offices of the DAS, the COO, and Mid-Atlantic Operations have joined forces to form a committee to assist families of hurricane victims who were relocated to the Washington metropolitan area and who are housed in the National Guard Amory in Washington, DC. Committee members are [Gwendolyn Gantt](#) (Mid-Atlantic Operations), [Vanessa Vaughn](#) (IT), [Gloria Kent](#), and [Denise Bond](#) (Office of the DAS). Efforts underway include:

- Adopting a family.
- Auction of donated items to raise funds.
- Spare change collection – employees will be asked to donate their spare change.
- New shoe donations for men, women and children.
- Donations of prepaid cell phones and phone cards.

## Mid-Atlantic Operations

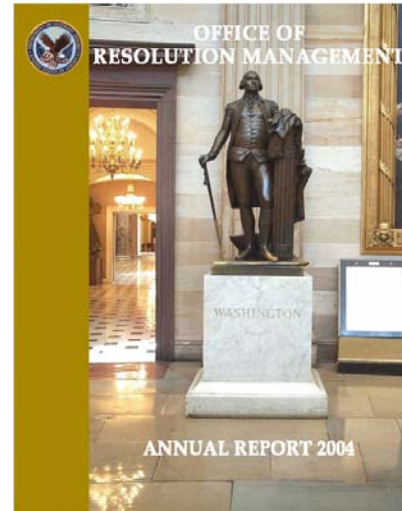
Congratulations to [Cheryl Thompson](#) who has been selected as a C-1 Counselor/Investigator. She will also serve as the team leader for the Mid-Atlantic Counselor Group.



## ORM Fiscal Year 2004

### Annual Report

ORM's Fiscal Year 2004 Annual Report will soon be available. Copies will be provided to ORM managers and will be sent to VA facilities. It will soon be available on-line at [www.va.gov/orm](http://www.va.gov/orm). For more information contact Tyrone Eddins or Terry Washington.



### EXCEL Conference

Mr. Jones, DAS for Resolution Management, other ORM managers, and employees attended the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's EXCEL Conference in Las Vegas, August 22 - 25th, 2005. This conference, for federal EEO managers, attorneys, EEO professionals and staff, offered 7 plenary sessions and 50 different workshops. Sessions include a wide range of topics such as Management Directive (MD)-715, preventing discrimination, communication differences, mediation tactics, ethics, diversity, and creative negotiating. Mr. Jones participated in the "EEO Managers' Forum", a panel discussion, with Stephen Shih, Chief, Center for Equal Employment Opportunity, Office of Personnel Management, and Franklin Jones, Acting EEO Manager, Customs and Border Protection. He discussed ORM's history, our efforts to improve EEO complaint processing in VA, and the other services and programs provided by ORM.

### FDR Conference

Mr. Jones was a guest speaker at the Federal Dispute Resolution Conference (FDR) in New York, NY, August 9, 2005. The conference ran from August 7-11, 2005. His presentation covered an overview of ORM's EEO complaint processing activities. The conference is an annual training program for federal employees that provides in-depth training on dispute resolution, as well as federal employment laws, policies and procedures. The conference is known as the premier conference on federal dispute resolution and related issues, with over 1,000 annual attendees.

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# Did You Know?

**SEPTEMBER IS...**

## **NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH**

The threat level is raised. “What can I do?” A terrorist bomb explodes somewhere overseas. “What can I do?” A powerful hurricane is approaching. “What can I do?”

That one question – “What can I do?” – is asked every time we are reminded that our lives can instantly be changed by a natural or man-made disaster. There is something we can all do to be prepared for any emergency and you have an opportunity to learn and share that information this September during National Preparedness Month.

National Preparedness Month is a nationwide effort to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. Throughout September, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross will work with a wide variety of organizations to highlight the importance of emergency preparedness and promote individual involvement through events and activities across the nation.

Check out the Readiness Campaign Web site at [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov) to find out how to develop a family preparedness plan and create “Go Kits” to see you through emergency periods at home and in the work place. After that, help prepare your community through your local Citizen Corps Council or American Red Cross Chapter. For more information on these programs, visit [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov) and [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

**Expect the unexpected and plan for it. Our national preparedness begins with you!** Sources are VACO Daily News and the Department of Homeland Security ■

# USALearning

USALearning, formerly GoLearn.gov, is the official learning and development site for the United States Federal Government. The product of the e-Training Initiative, USALearning supports the development of the Federal workforce and advances the accomplishment of agency missions through simplified and one-stop access to high quality e-Learning products, information, and services. Employees that use USALearning can take advantage of:

- **Convenience** - Access courses and information anytime and anywhere through the power of the Internet.
- **Delivery** - Manage your learning by setting a learning agenda and controlling the order in which you complete courses.
- **Professional Development** - Select e-Learning courses that impact performance and deliver results; use chat rooms to access Community of Practice forums to share knowledge and lessons learned.
- **Cost Effective** - Utilize the learning options available through three separate Service Providers to identify the right solution and cost for your organization. For more information, go to [www.usalearning.gov](http://www.usalearning.gov). Source is USALearning ■

## ORM Training for SEPTEMBER 2005

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			<sup>1</sup> ADR Coordinator's Course Validation Bay Pines, FL	<sup>2</sup> ADR Coordinator's Course Validation Bay Pines, FL
<sup>5</sup> Labor Day	<sup>6</sup>	<sup>7</sup>	<sup>8</sup>	<sup>9</sup>
<sup>12</sup> Basic Mediation Skills Training Fayetteville, NC	<sup>13</sup> Basic Mediation Skills Training Fayetteville, NC	<sup>14</sup> Basic Mediation Skills Training Fayetteville, NC	<sup>15</sup> V-Tel 3 hrs - HR Mgmt Overview: Training/HR Summary Basic Mediation Skills Training Fayetteville, NC	<sup>16</sup> Basic Mediation Skills Training Fayetteville, NC
<sup>19</sup>	<sup>20</sup>	<sup>21</sup>	<sup>21</sup>	<sup>23</sup>
<sup>26</sup>	<sup>27</sup>	<sup>28</sup>	<sup>29</sup>	<sup>30</sup>

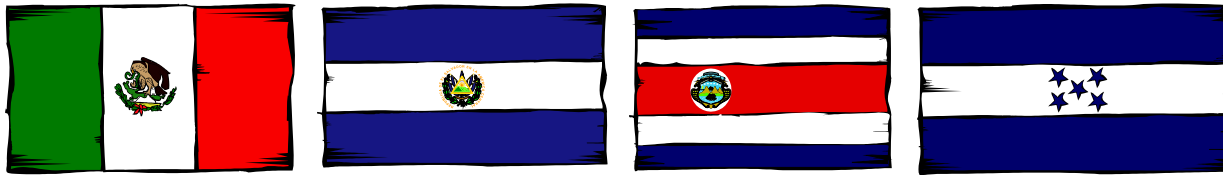


# National Hispanic History Month

## September 15 – October 15

VA joins the Nation in celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15. This year's theme is "Hispanic Americans: Strong and Colorful Threads in the American Fabric."

As the fastest-growing segment of our population, Hispanic Americans are an increasingly vital part of our Nation's future. They have served our country with distinction and made important contributions in such areas as the arts, business, academia, and government. Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15, the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries — Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico declared its independence on September 16 and Chile on September 18.



The term Hispanic, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, refers to Spanish-speaking people in the United States of any race.

The following is a snapshot of Hispanics in VA.

- Overall, VA employment of Hispanics reached 6.67 percent in FY 2004. The FY 2003 representation was 6.44 percent.
- In FY 2004, the average grade of white collar Hispanics at VA was GS-8.
- Hispanic employment increased in 21 of 30 major VA occupations, including medical technologist, information technology management, nursing assistant, practical nurse, and nurse.

Sources are VACO Daily News, Diversity Management and EEO, and Infoplease.com. ■

ORM NEWS is a monthly publication of the Office of Resolution Management. Contact Terry Washington, External Affairs Program, by e-mail or by calling (202) 501-2800 concerning the content of this newsletter. Back copies of this newsletter can be found on our Web site [www.va.gov/orm](http://www.va.gov/orm).